



Coping with Construction

A Guide for Lincoln Businesses



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
 WHAT TO EXPECT	
Access During Construction	3
Closures and Detours	4
Utilities	5
Property Impacts.....	5
Access After Construction.....	6
A New Environment.....	6
 WAYS TO COPE.....	7
Tips and Ideas.....	8
Advice and Experience.....	10
 GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS.....	11

INTRODUCTION

As a business owner, you contribute to - and benefit from - Lincoln's dynamic, growing community. Responding to the demands of this growth, while also preserving the high quality of life Lincoln residents have come to expect, is a constant challenge for City government. To facilitate these demands, the City of Lincoln's Public Works & Utilities Department has an ongoing mission to maintain, enhance, and expand the City's infrastructure.

More often than not, it is the business community that first recognizes the need for infrastructure improvements and their long-term benefits. More than likely, though, this means the short-term inconvenience embodied by orange barrels will someday be at your doorstep.

Most projects have been planned and programmed for several years through the City's various planning processes. These include the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Program, Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. Each of these planning activities includes public participation processes in which you, as a business owner, are encouraged to take part.

When a project goes to construction, the City needs to balance an array of what can be conflicting interests: using taxpayer dollars wisely while accommodating the needs of businesses, motorists and residents who are affected by them.

The City and those businesses affected by construction need to work together to minimize inconveniences to motorists and customers, which is why the Public Works & Utilities Department has produced this guide. We hope it will increase your understanding of how construction projects operate and help you to cope through them.



WHAT TO EXPECT

You already know to expect dust, mud, noise, orange barrels, and changes in traffic patterns. But there are other “side effects” to construction you may not be aware of.

Access During Construction

We understand that access to your business is a top concern. You rely on your customers, employees and suppliers to keep your business going. While it is inevitable that construction crews will need to work in front of driveways and access roads that lead to businesses, the City must maintain alternate access to them during construction.

Unfortunately, this temporary access cannot always be as direct as it was before construction began. In addition, access may need to be provided on a newly graded, interim access road or need to change several times throughout a project.

The City encourages businesses to use City-approved directional signs and to join together to communicate with customers and find ways to attract them throughout construction. See the “Tips and Ideas” section of this guide for more information.

The best time to begin communicating about access to your business is during the design stage of a project, when initial construction phasing plans are developed. During this time the City contacts the affected property and business owners and holds informational meetings. Your input will help the designers develop a recommended construction phasing plan.

This initial plan may need to change slightly once a contractor is selected, according to the resources available to the contractor. It is also at this time that more specifics can be known about duration of access changes and detours. Once a contractor is selected, communication between the Project Manager and you will continue so that changes that are necessary can be made with your input, and you remain informed.



Closures and Detours

The City must strike a balance between giving full rein of a project area to the contractor and providing full access to people who need get to and from the adjacent property, all while ensuring that the work zone is safe for workers and the general public.

Allowing the contractor the freedom to work on a closed road can shorten the duration of construction while keeping costs lower, but creates a greater inconvenience to people who need access to the adjacent property. Providing greater access for motorists - by such mechanisms as keeping lanes open and using flagging crews - lessens inconveniences for motorists, but can lengthen the duration of construction and make it more costly.

There are three typical ways to handle traffic during construction:

- ❶ **Under construction but open to traffic.** This is usually applied to heavier-traveled roads, with at least one lane remaining open in each direction.
- ❷ **Closed to through-traffic, open only to local traffic. Detours provided.** This type of closure may be necessary to reduce the risk of conflicts with motorists when the construction requires a high number of trucks and heavy equipment to be maneuvering in the area. However, local traffic that begins or ends within the construction zone is still allowed access, although the path may be very bumpy, dusty or muddy.
- ❸ **Closed to all but emergency vehicles. Detours provided.** In rarer cases, a road may need to be closed to all but emergency vehicles. In these cases, affected property owners are notified, and efforts are made to complete the work as quickly as possible.



When road closures are necessary, detours are used and marked with appropriate signage. Even for local traffic beginning or ending at property adjacent to the closed area, detours are usually a quicker, smoother way to travel. Less local traffic within the construction zone also means fewer interruptions and a safer working environment for construction crews, which can help control costs and ultimately contribute to construction being completed sooner.

Utilities

Construction in developed areas is similar to an intricate surgery. Peeling back the earth and pavement is only the first step to this process. There are a number of utility lines that run along roadway right-of-way to service the properties. These include telephone, gas, fiberoptic, television, electric, water, storm drainage and sanitary sewer utilities.



Service lines need to be identified and usually carefully removed and relocated. These activities are hazardous and must be highly coordinated between the utility and roadway construction crews. Actual construction often must cease until these lines are identified, service is shut off, and lines are relocated.

When planned service interruptions are necessary, you will be notified in advance. With so much activity on a construction site, sometimes service is inadvertently interrupted. The contractor works to communicate and correct unplanned interruptions as soon as possible.

Property Impacts

Most private property impacts are known during the final stages of a project's design, and negotiated with the owner before the project goes to construction. In addition to needing to purchase land for the project, there may be other impacts to your property as well. For example, lighting, fencing, signage or sprinkler systems may need to be relocated.

The City follows federal, state and local laws for reimbursement and compensation to owners of private property affected by a publicly funded project. The City's Housing Rehabilitation and Real Estate Division (phone: 402-441-7864) has more information and can help you through this process.

Access After Construction

The way motorists access - get to and from - your property could change permanently once construction is complete. "Access management" is a process used to balance the competing needs of traffic movement and land access to prevent safety problems and traffic congestion. When a new road is built or an existing road is improved, the new design usually includes some form of access management to ensure the road's long-term effectiveness.



Methods of access management could include:

- limiting the number of driveways and signalized intersections,
- standardized spacing between driveways and between intersections,
- raised medians,
- dedicated turn lanes (auxiliary lanes),
- shared driveways, and
- interior (frontage) roads that separate traffic traveling at lower speeds from traffic traveling at higher speeds.

A New Environment

Once infrastructure improvements are completed, the environment you were used to will have a different appearance. Many roadway projects involve adding additional lanes, which could mean a narrower space between traffic and your place of business. Driveways could be more or less steep once a roadway is tied back to the elevation of the property. Curbs, sidewalks and associated landscaping could be at a higher or lower elevation. Removal of trees and other landscaping may have been necessary, as well as changes to lights and signs.



Where possible, the City tries to mitigate these impacts and add aesthetic interest with new landscaping or architectural elements. All changes occur within City Codes and standards.

WAYS TO COPE

Three guiding principles will help you cope through the construction of a project:

- 1 Get to know the project leadership, usually the Project Manager or Project Inspector.** They are the first sources of project information and know the day-to-day activities. They will need direct contact with you throughout the project so they can keep you informed and respond to your concerns. It is helpful to know their names and phone numbers.
- 2 Organize and collaborate with your neighbor businesses.** Strengthen your business community by joining forces and sharing resources to find mutually beneficial solutions to inconveniences and to communicate to your customers.
- 3 Communicate with your customers.** The City communicates construction updates to the broader public in a variety of ways. Flyers, newsletters and media releases are some examples. But more targeted communications to your customers, whom you know much better than the City, can assure them that you are still open and entice them to keep coming back.



South Street Construction Alert!

Madonna & Therapy+ Plus patrons please use our Normal Boulevard entrance. South Street is under construction from 48th to 56th street.

Therapy+ Plus
of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5445 South St. • 486-9099

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5401 South St. • 489-7102
madonna.org

Tips and Ideas

- Take advantage of existing business associations. Look to your Chamber of Commerce or other organization to help organize and lead efforts to work with the City during a construction project. This may involve establishing a special committee under the umbrella of the organization.



- Create a new association or committee comprised of your neighbor businesses. Appoint leaders to attend construction progress meetings or communicate with the project manager on behalf of the group. If you don't have such a group already, this community alliance can continue after construction is complete.
- Aggressively communicate to your customers how to get to your business. You can do this through print and broadcast advertising, flyers, and direct mail. Place street maps in print ads and direct mail.
- Use your existing means of customer communication. Include construction information in your newsletters, bill-stuffers and invoices.
- Use creative ways to advertise on the radio, which is an effective way to reach motorists.
- Conduct a cooperative advertising campaign with a special logo and slogans.



Tips and Ideas *(continued)*

- Use City-approved temporary signs directing motorists how to get to your business. The sign with the arrow in the below photo is an example of an acceptable guide sign, for which you need a City permit. Sign permit application forms are available on the City website or by calling Engineering Services using the information on the back cover of this booklet.
- Create flyers, placemats and posters communicating how to navigate to your business through construction.
- Hold construction-related events, such as special sales, cookouts or festivals with activities, prizes and treats to draw customers. Distribute calendars of these events.
- Hold promotions offering discounts for frequent customers rewarding them for coming back.
- Plan your business remodeling when construction is at its peak near your property.
- Communicate travel routes with your suppliers and schedule deliveries at non-peak travel times.
- Run shuttle services from customer parking to businesses.
- Have employees car pool or take the bus.



Advice and Experience

Kent Stadler, owner of Kent's Shoes, used radio advertising and a sense of humor to communicate with his customers during the East "O" Street widening project. Messages in his advertising included challenges to his mostly male clientele: "It's a man thing to get to Kent's Shoes," and renaming the intersection where his store is located "66th and Shoe," instead of 66th and "Q" Streets.

"A business has to be ready and willing to speak up and to tell their people what's going on - or they're not going to find you during construction."

In spite of the closure of that intersection, Stadler said his business was more profitable that year than the year before.

"There's never a good time to do this (construction), but it's got to be done."

"A business has to be ready and willing to speak up and to tell their people what's going on - or they're not going to find you during construction...My guys found me."

Chad Winters, owner of Leon's Food Mart, used existing means of communication to tell his customers about construction occurring on South Street in front of his store. The store printed maps in its regular weekly newspaper inserts with the message, "You can still get to us."

Winters also held a cookout promotion during Independence Day week, with a local radio station doing a live remote broadcast. His store also hung up posters and worked with area merchants to produce signs directing motorists to area stores.

Terry Reynoldson, Assistant Manager, for Earl May Nursery and Garden Center, said his store offered special promotions during the East "O" Street project. The store advertised the promotions in the newspaper with maps illustrating how to get to the store. The store also rewarded customers who ventured through the inconvenience of the construction by giving them discount coupons for their next visit.

Reynoldson said getting to know the Project Manager was also helpful.

"It was good having one person to talk to," he said.

Jim Fram, President of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, said his organization can be a resource for businesses. In the past, the Chamber has acted as a liaison to make sure the impacts to individual businesses are understood by the City and the contractor.

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS

Access: A way or means of entering or leaving a location.

Arterials: Designated “principal” or “minor,” arterials may run for many miles across the city and county. Posted speed limits are generally in the middle ranges 35 to 45 miles per hour with access provided at grade. Traffic signals are often used to regulate the flow of vehicles along arterials. Access is managed, although movement to adjacent property along arterials is sometimes allowed depending upon the character of the area and the uses being served.

Bid/Let: To offer a price for a construction job. This is a competitive process by which construction companies submit “bids” to the City to construct a project. Bids are awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder that meets the specification requirements. “Let” is a synonym for “Bid.”

Capacity: The volume of vehicles the road was designed to carry; can also be applied to transit or bicycle/pedestrian paths.

Capital Improvement Program: An annually updated document approved by the City Council that describes the City's transportation, flood control, and park improvements, along with other capital projects and expenditures programmed for the next six years.

Comprehensive Plan: A planning document that comprises the city and county's policies and vision for long-term development over a 25-year timeframe. The document establishes a vision for growth while considering land use, social and economic outlooks, transportation and environmental issues. Updates are usually made every five years and coincide with an extensive public input effort.

Collectors: These streets serve as links between local streets and the arterial system. They provide both access and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Moderate to low traffic volumes are characteristic of these streets.

Design: The engineering process that occurs before a project can be built. During the design phase, a project's detailed configuration and construction requirements are determined with the production of technical specifications, drawings and cost estimates.

Design Engineer: The person or firm responsible for the design of a project.

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS *(continued)*

Functional Classifications: A road classification that indicates how the roadway is intended to be used and of the relative importance of a roadway to the neighborhood, community, and region. Functional classifications include: interstate, expressway, arterial, collector and local street.

Grade: (1) Elevation. “At-grade” means at ground level.
(2) To shape or reshape an earth road by means of cutting or filling.
(3) A roadway's rate of ascent or descent.

Grade Intersection: An intersection where all roadways join or cross at the same level.

Grade Separation: A structure that provides for highway, bicycle or pedestrian traffic to pass over or under another highway or railroad tracks.

Grading: (1) Construction of the earthwork portion of the Highway. (2) Planing or smoothing the surface of various parts of a roadbed.

Level of Service (LOS): a qualitative rating of the effectiveness of a roadway in serving traffic, in terms of operating conditions such as traffic flow, using an alphabetical scale from A to F with A being the best (free flow) and F being the worst (stopped traffic).

Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): A policy-making board comprised of representatives from local government and transportation authorities who review transportation issues and develop transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area. The Lincoln MPO is responsible for developing the Long-Range Transportation Plan, which is covered in the Mobility and Transportation sections of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

Local Streets: Local streets typically have a low amount of traffic with a high level of access to the properties along them. An example would be residential street with a driveway for each of its houses.

Local Traffic: Traffic that begins or ends (has an origin or destination) within a specified area.

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS *(continued)*

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): A plan developed by the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization that extends out over a 20-year horizon. The LRTP acts as the official guide for the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds expected to be available in Lincoln and Lancaster County. It is integrated into the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

Median: The portion of a divided highway separating the traveled ways for traffic in opposite directions.

Minor Arterials: This functional class serves trips of moderate length and offers a lower level of mobility than principal arterials. This class interconnects with, and augments principal arterials, distributes traffic to smaller areas, and contains streets that place some emphasis on land access. These are characterized by moderate to heavy traffic volumes.

Principal Arterial: This functional class of street serves the major portion of through-traffic entering and leaving the urban area and is designed to carry the highest traffic volumes. Included in this class are fully controlled access facilities and partially controlled access facilities. For other principal arterials, the concept of service to abutting land is subordinate to serving major traffic movements.

Project Inspector: The site representative for the City, responsible for issuing instructions and drawings to the contractor's representative. Also called the Project Observer, field representative or field engineer.

Project Manager: The person or firm responsible for the planning, coordination and controlling of a project from inception to completion, meeting the project's requirements and ensuring completion on time, within cost and to required quality standards. Often, there is a City Project Manager and a consultant Project Manager.

Right-of-Way (ROW): The land (usually a strip) acquired for or devoted to highway or rail transportation purposes.

Traffic Calming: Measures to reduce the negative effects of vehicles, and improve conditions for walking or bicycling. A familiar example is the orange barrels with the warning to stop for pedestrians.

Through-traffic: Traffic that passes through a specified area, without beginning or ending within the area.

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS *(continued)*

Traffic Control Devices: Signs, signals, markings, and devices used for the purpose of regulating, warning, or guiding traffic.

Traffic Control Plans: The overall plans for traffic control during construction. These plans are formulated during the final design phase or during the construction of a project.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The TIP is an intermediate-range planning document that reflects the transportation expenditures programmed over the next five-years. Project details are provided in the TIP such as the general project description and cost, the funding source and funding year.

Volume: The number of vehicles that actually pass through a given mile of road; can also be applied to transit or bicycle/pedestrian paths.

Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) ratio: The ratio of traffic volume (number of vehicles) on a roadway to the roadway's vehicle capacity; used to calculate level of service.

Superintendent: A representative of the contractor who is responsible for the execution of a construction project.

PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Project: _____
Name of Project Manager: _____
Phone Number: _____
Name of Project Inspector: _____
Phone Number: _____
Notes: _____

This publication is produced by:
The City of Lincoln
Department of Public Works and Utilities
Engineering Services Division
531 Westgate Blvd., Suite 100
Phone: 402.441.7711
E-mail address: pubworks@ci.lincoln.ne.us
www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/pworks